

Agricultural Marketing Service  
Cotton Division  
Grading Branch  
Classing Office  
Agricultural Commodity Grader (Cotton)  
GS-1980-07  
Seasonal

SJ 358

## INTRODUCTION

This position is located in a local classing office of the Cotton Division. This office is one of several classing offices located in a major cotton producing area through which are administered programs on cotton, cottonseed, cotton linters, and related commodities provided for in legislative and administrative requirements in connection with standards, marketing services, and allied regulatory responsibilities.

## MAJOR DUTIES

The work involves examination and evaluation of cotton to determine its official U.S. class and acceptability in terms of quality and condition in accordance with official standards and related regulations. The incumbent, at this level, performs the full range of classing assignments.

Examines and evaluates cotton samples to determine appropriate grade by examining the samples of cotton and evaluating and comparing the color, preparation, and foreign matter (leaf, grass, bark, etc.) of each sample to arrive at a grade.

Provides certified assurance of the quality of cotton. Checks to see that certificates have been posted and that assigned classifications have been recorded.

Prepares reports and performs related duties in the classing office.

Collects cotton samples for use in surveys, studies, demonstrations, standards, and training programs.

## Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position Level 1-5, 750 pts.

Knowledges of official standards and skill in determining the grade of the full range of cotton samples.

Knowledge of the characteristics of cotton, cottonseed, and cotton linters.

Ability to determine the color (hue, lightness, and chroma) and amount of leaf trash, and preparation (smoothness), which combine to indicate grade to be assigned to the cotton sample.

Knowledge of the official standards and regulations, and the manual dexterity and exacting sensory discrimination used in determining grade.

#### Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls Level 2-2, 125 pts.

The office supervisor makes classing assignments and coordinates the work.

The classer performs recurring assignments without specific instructions. However, difficult technical decisions and problems or unusual situations are referred to the supervisor.

A higher graded supervisor spot-checks the classification of a random sample (5-10 percent) of assigned cotton samples.

#### Factor 3 - Guidelines Level 3-3, 275 pts.

Written guidelines include parts of the official grade standards, regulations, visual aids, instructional training material, and other written guidelines provided locally.

The employee uses extensive judgment, particularly in making borderline grade determinations. These judgments must be made rapidly (2 per minute) and generally without referring to either the physical or written descriptive standards for specific guidance.

#### Factor 4 - Complexity Level 4-2, 75 pts.

The work consists of determining the grade of each sample of cotton. Grades are based on factors of color, leaf, and ginning preparation. There are 39 possible grades as well as several recognized reduction factors applicable to any of these grades.

These reduction factors vary from one location to another with harvesting practices and weather conditions. The classer must independently describe quality of every sample in all factors.

Classification requires two of the five human senses - sight and touch. Memory, reasoning, and close concentration are required to a high degree. The classer sees the color, preparation, and foreign matter and also feels the foreign matter in samples. Appearance of standards boxes must be remembered.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect Level 5-3, 150 pts.

The work involves making final classification determinations on individual samples of lint cotton.

The classification directly affects the price or value of the 480-pound bale represented by the sample. The monetary valuation of the commodity for which the certification memorandum is issued affects the financial interest of producers, handlers, and buyers.

Factor 6. - Personal Contacts Level 6-1, 10 pts.

Contacts include other employees in the laboratory.

Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts Level 7-1, 20 pts.

The purpose of contacts with other employees is limited to the exchange of technical and administrative information related to the work. Coworkers are working toward a common objective - accurate grade determination.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands Level 8-2, 20 pts.

Classification of cotton is performed from a standing position. Sample containers weighing from 20 to 25 pounds are constantly moved by the employee. The classification process requires physical dexterity and mental alertness and is extremely tiring, both mentally and physically.

Factor 9 - Work Environment Level 9-2, 20 pts.

The work environment exposes employee to crowded conditions. Moderate discomfort is experienced due to presence of cotton dust. Respirator masks are recommended for employees due to lint fly and dust present in the air.

TOTAL POINTS - 1445